

+

4381. C. 39

RELIGION

A

F A R C E.

I N

A LETTER to a Reader at the University of
SALAMANCA.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, No. 39, Fleet-Street.

M.DCC.LXXIII.

R E P L I C A T I O N

P A R T C



LETTER TO A READER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

THE
UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. Williams, No. 39, Fleet Street.

MDCCLXXXVII.

Religion a Farce, &c.

London, Feb. 3, 1773.

Honoured Sir,

SINCE my arrival here, in company with our common friend, Don Diago Lopez, we made it our business, by means of a shrewd secretary, thoroughly acquainted with the manners, customs and genius of the English, to get every information possible relative to their church constitution especially; and, finding the liberty of the press one of their standard palladiums, we opened, after some fruitless attempts with other papers, a correspondence with the London Pacquet; he, by an essay to trace religion from the fountain head, and I, by laying hold on every temporary subject that occurred for tracing it upwards; so that, had we been allowed to proceed, there might be hopes of making short work with religious disputes; and of our meeting, after having levelled the several difficulties raised, as well against the system of nature as revelation, and the most plausible pretender to both; of meeting, I say, half way between religion's, hoariness and youth. What his success has been, or may hereafter be, he will, I presume, apprise you of; but for me, despairing of any further

B

pro-

progress, I send you the following detail, to verify, in part, the Thesis of my Title-page.

Whatever it might be with the ancient mysteries of paganism, where the practice, instead of keeping pace with the specious profession, generally gave it the lye, the heavy charge of dissimulation and hypocrisy seems, at first sight, insupportable against any branch of christianity especially. However, that it is not quite destitute of all ground, so far as the sentiments of the heart may be proved by overt-acts, is a no less obvious than lamentable truth. Though, from the almost universal dissoluteness of the age, and the little regard every where paid to truth, virtue, and their sacred ties, when clashing with ambition, interest and other passions, witness the crying and unconscionable partition of Poland, our own shocking venality, &c. it might be brought home to the generality of mankind: yet, my present view is confined to the inhabitants of this isle, where, since the reformation, the gospel is professed in its native purity, stript of all disguise. Nor are they the laity I level at; so far from it, that I am of opinion, there may be as much solid devotion under a British lady's flowered gauze capuchin, as the veil or mantlet of a Spanish prude telling her dangling beads. The clergy are my only butts, not for what they generally are cried out against, the dissingenuousness of their subscriptions, the luxury, pomp and avarice of their chiefs, notwithstanding their professions of veracity, humility and disinterestedness, but for their seeming settled aversion to have their principles brought to light and canvassed, whilst they would be thought their most zealous champions.

That

That this is their genuine case will, I apprehend, appear to such as, with an unprejudiced eye, consider the following facts, where they seem to make as great a secret thereof as the heathen mistagogues and hierophants have done of theirs, witness the profound silence they observe, when called upon in a public paper, or otherwise, for information, or upon receiving this, when required, which is the subject of some loud complaints repeatedly made by the *Real Seeker*, a gentleman our secretary got us acquainted with, in his correspondence with protestants of different denominations, as may be seen by the *italics*, page 68, 84, 93, &c. by no answer being made to the animadversions upon an *address of a layman of the church of England* to British Romanists, page 141; to those upon the priest-catching *little carpenter's alarm*, page 151; to those upon *Matthew Taylor's Bloody Tribunal*, page 161, though made known to them, page 171; again, by the *italics*, page 173, 281, 294, 306, 307, 312; by the silence of the *Middlesex Journal*, page 337; of Mr. Cooke, page 390; of a *neighbour*, appendix 1, and 7; of a *quaker*, page 11; he tells us besides, he has sent two copies of the eleventh letter in his appendix, respecting subscription, to the association at the *Feathers Tavern* with the following letter.

To the Secretary of the *Feathers-Tavern* Association.

SIR,

THE greatest objection many gentlemen of worth have to becoming members of your truly protestant society is the advantage, the inclosed letter makes papists derive from its project, either by trumping up the like pretence, if suc-

cessful, or unanswerably branding our establishment with the most shameful stamp of inconsistency, if blasted, a dilemma to them inextricable, and of course giving every true antipapistical zealot room to apprehend the unadvisedness of the steps you take; remove this by an answer thereto inserted or advertised in the Gazetteer, and you may depend, if satisfactory, upon their signing both the association-paper, petition and bill, and doing all in their power to promote the laudable cause in conjunction with

Your humble servant,

Aug. 26. 1772.

PASTORCULUS.

P. S. Your making no answer will argue a diffidence of your cause in our eyes.

And in fine, that he has sent both the *Jew Apologist* and the *Real Seeker* to the rev. Mr. C—e, a fallen priest, r——r of M—d---d, N---h---p---n-sh--e, with the following letter; but all to no purpose.

Dear Sir,

BEING lately informed by your kinsman Mr. F——y, of the step you have taken, and making no doubt of its being the result of conviction, especially since you have ingenuously declared to have been led therein by the superior force of reasons, which you make your brags to be proof against the utmost efforts of all Rome's votaries, I make bold to beg you would, for the sake of our former reciprocally professed friendship, help me to the motives in particular which have induced you thereto. You may depend upon my giving them their due weight, and, if sufficiently

ciently cogent, not hesitating a moment, though in the decline of life, in following the example. Undisguised truth has always been my darling pursuit, no one could have taken more pains that way, witness the productions I present you with in the parcel, where you will find me so little swayed by prepossession and prejudice of education, that, if sincere, you must confess, if in Spain, I scarcely, if at all, could escape the inquisitorial flames. Implicit faith and blind obedience I ever held of some merit in the vulgar and illiterate; but highly unworthy persons of any genius, tolerable parts and reflection. I cannot easily see, why, in the sight of God, we may any more avail ourselves of other people's belief than works, in regard to which the gospel is however express, that every one shall stand upon his own bottom. (*Matt.* 16. 27.) Whether I only flatter myself with the thing, or really act up to the character of a free-thinker, you are left to judge, after perusal of the work, which I readily submit to the censure of any man, or set of men, you may think competent judges, if they but state their objections to what they find exceptionable therein. If made sensible of swerving in the least from this my profession, I shall be ready to give you the right hand of fellowship, otherwise may, I presume, expect the compliment from you to

Your humble servant,

T. M.

B 3

P. S.

P. S. Should you favour me with an answer, or any animadversions upon the books, pray direct for me, at Mr. F-----y's, or, through any friend here, get them inserted in any newspaper you please to name. Your utter silence, besides disappointing a fast friend, and discouraging a perhaps hearty proselyte, will in every impartial eye be construed into an undoubted argument of your insincerity, and standing self-condemned for your hapless backsliding; and you will be wholly to blame, should your character for integrity suffer by the neglect's taking wind.

AS for myself, you will find by what follows I have equally the same reason of complaint with the *Seeker*, whose arguments I only mean, for the present, to enforce in favour of a general toleration. For launching into public, I took the opportunity of the following letter.

To the PRINTER of the GAZETTEER.

PROTESTANTS of the established Church in England renounce implicit faith on the Church of Rome; dissenters from the church of England renounce implicit faith on *any* church.—Query, “Whether the members of all protestant churches established by law, or dissenting from the legal establishment, who do not understand the original of the Old and New Testament, are not implicit believers, as their faith must be grounded on the supposed fidelity of the translators?”

An answer to this Querie will oblige one who wishes to walk in the right path to Heaven.

Aug. 6, 1772.

G. X. L.

To

To this I made the following answer.

To the PRINTER of the GAZETTEER.

TO the *Quere* in your paper of the 6th current, I answer in the affirmative. There is no station in either civil or religious life but may require the implicit faith of some. Thus we depend upon the parson, physician, lawyer, butcher, baker, &c. for honestly acting their parts: But your correspondent G. X. L. would sure not pretend this should universally obtain in all cases and persons, that they who are not conversant in the original idioms of scripture, should hoodwink themselves in regard not only to the *fidelity of the translators*, but even to the application others make of the translation, the propriety and energy whereof they may themselves be equally acquainted with. This, if I mistake not, were totally swerving from the *right path to heaven*, he is so intent upon pursuing: for, each one standing here on his own bottom, it seems his own conscience and sense of things should be his guide.

August 12, 1772.

NEUTER.

No reply being made, I revived the debate, by sending the following letter.

To the PRINTER of the LONDON PACKET.

S I R,

BEING given to understand we may expect a fresh attack upon our articles and liturgy next sessions of parliament, I and many more, well wishers to the common cause, would be glad some of your correspondents would before-hand be kind enough to rid us of some scruples, which hinder

our taking share; either pro or con, in the important debate, by solutions to the following queries :

1. Is implicit faith, or our pinning it upon other mens sleeves, not hypocritical ? or making believe to assent to what we may perhaps not comprehend ?

2. If other people's works can be of no availment with us on the last day, why should their faith be so ?

3. If the chief complaint of the first reformers has been the exaction of blind obedience, should the like pretence not be deemed an usurpation shamefully inconsistent in their followers ?

4. Should the clerical petition or dissenting bill pass, with what colour can the repeal of the test be refused, should the Roman Catholics sue for it ?

Sept 23, 1772.

NEUTER.

To this was made the following reply.

TO the PRINTER of the LONDON PACKET.

S I R,

NEURER in your Paper of Wednesday last asserts, that a fresh ATTACK (so he calls it) is intended to be made on the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England, the next session of parliament.

After announcing this, he desires a solution to the following queries.

1. Is implicit faith, or our pinning it upon other mens sleeves, not hypocritical ?

Answer. Yes certainly.

2. If other peoples works can be of no availment with us at the last day, why should their faith be so ?

Answer. Neither the one nor the other will be availing.

3. If

3. If the chief complaint of the first reformers has been the exaction of blind obedience, should the like pretence not be deemed an usurpation shamefully inconsistent in their followers?

Answer. Yes, doubtless.

4. Should the clerical petition or dissenting bill pass, with what colour can the repeal of the test be refused, should the Roman Catholics sue for it?

Answer. Because neither the Clergy nor the Dissenters acknowledge a foreign jurisdiction or a power to dispense with oaths, but are both friendly to the state.

A BOURKITE,
half Papist, half Protestant.

Sept. 30, 1772.

Hereupon I pursued my queries as follows.

To the PRINTER of the LONDON PACKET.

S I R,

BRED from my juvenile years under an inquisitorial meridian, I often bless my stars for business calling me to be resident in England, was it but for the invaluable blessing of the liberty not only of speech, but the press especially being reported to be here in the zenith of its glory. I was ever of opinion, that, thought, being under no other controul than heaven's, should, in its social communication be directed or restrained but by that celestial ray which characterises the human being, reason; as otherwise his fate, to me, would be no better than that of the carter's horse. The voice of fame, I must own, proved true in civil and political; but not always so in religious affairs. Do you want sale for your property, to know the merits of your suit in law, a vote for being a representative, a companion for life, &c. you rarely,

if ever, find the advertisement fail of success; when it is daily the reverse with polemical doubts. It is odds, that scruples in this way, if, what is often refused, made room for in a news-paper, the best vehicle, I know, for interchanging our ideas, will never be resolved. This, however, has, I must confess, not been hitherto my case, thanks be to your distinguished impartiality for obligingly inserting in your paper of 23d ult. some seemingly very interesting queries, I took the liberty of sending for the purpose, and to the complaisance of your correspondent of 30th ult. subscribing himself a *Bourkite*, for candidly giving his sentiments there-upon. But their not appearing ultimately satisfactory, imboldens me to beg your further compliance for admitting the following.

5. Does the silence of the patrons of our religious establishment not denote a visible decay of zeal, if not religion, among them? Or,

6. Does it not give room to suspect their being so perplexedly stunned by said queries, as to stand self-condemned?

7. Would an attempt to prevent their continuation, with still more reason, not be liable to the same disgraceful construction?

8. Should the petitioners drop their claim, or not pursue it with becoming warmth; may it not be, lest R. C. should come in for snacks in right of the fourth query?

9. If a Jew, acknowledging the spiritual jurisdiction of the Sanhedrim of Aleppo or Babylon, may be protected and tolerated in England, why may a R. C. not? Or,

10. Will our *half Papist*, *Bourkite*, undertake to shew, any dogmatical decision of Rome inimical to the state? Or,

11. Her

11. Her assumed power of *dispensing with oaths* to be a rule of faith indispensibly binding? Or,

12. Will he agree to confront Junius in Lloyd's Evening Post of 26th Feb. who holds the negative, by distinguishing Rome's divine from her human prerogatives and usurpations? Or, in fine,

13. Are the professors of Arianism or Socinianism, to be supposed more *friendly* to the state than those of Rome's speculative creeds?

Oct. 9, 1772.

NEUTER.

Here follow the solutions given to these queries.

To the PRINTER of the LONDON PACKET.

S I R,

NEUTER in your paper of the 9th, acknowledges my complaisance and candor in the solution of his queries, and though he confesses himself not *ultimately* satisfied with the plain and explicit answers, yet goes on putting further questions, instead of first shewing (which he ought to have done) wherein the former reply was unsatisfactory. However I shall take him in his own way.

Query V. Does the silence of the patrons of our religious establishment not denote a visible decay of zeal, if not religion among them?

Answer. Certainly, but, *Dulcis odor lucri, &c.*

VI. Does it not give room to suspect their being so perplexedly stunned by said queries as to stand self-condemned?

Answer. Certainly.

VII. Would an attempt to prevent their continuation with still more reason, not be liable to the same disgraceful construction?

Answer. Certainly.

VIII.

VIII. Should the petitioners drop their claim, or not pursue it with becoming warmth, may it not be, lest the R—n C—s should come in for snacks?

Answer. The petitioners discover no disposition to relinquish their design. But whether they pursue it or not, there does not appear to be the least intention to abolish the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, &c. but the contrary.

IX. If a Jew, acknowledging the spiritual jurisdiction of the Sanhedrim of Aleppo or Babylon, may be protected and tolerated in England, why may a R—n C—c not?

Answer. The Jews have never, that I know of, assumed any jurisdiction over temporal governors, or pretended to a power of *dispensing* with the most sacred obligations.

X. Can any dogmatical decision of Rome be shewn to be inimical to the state?

Answer. The annual publication of the bull *In Cæna Domini* on Maunday Thursday, at Rome, shews manifestly the Pope's claim to *kingship* in Great Britain and Ireland. This interference is most *inimical* to the state.

XI. Is Rome's assumed power of *dispensing* with oaths to be a rule of faith indispensibly binding?

Answer. Yes. This practice had the sacred sanction of the council of Constance, and hath lately been visibly fulfilled in the melancholy fate of the Polish Dissidents.

XII. Will Bourkite agree to confront Junius, &c?

Answer. No reply can be made to this, as Junius's writings are not at hand.

XIII. Are the professors of Arianism or Socinianism to be supposed more *friendly* to the state than those of Rome's speculative creeds.

Ans.

Answer. Neither Arians nor Socinians acknowledge the above Popish tenets, and consequently are not *unfriendly* to the state.

A BOURKITE,
Half-Papist, half Protestant.

Oct. 16, 1772.

The queries I further pursued, as followeth.

TO the PRINTER of the LONDON PACKET.

S I R,

WHAT I apprehended at first is come to pass; your kind indulgence, whereof I am at a loss for words to express my grateful acknowledgment, has served no other purpose than that of strengthening the notion I had already conceived of these infidel times, when religion, if at all, is the last of even churchmens concerns; unless it should chance to answer some mercenary end. It is not a little mortifying that I am left to surmise and unable to account for their supinuity and recreantise; to say religious subjects, are unbefitting news-papers in company with *hue and Cry*, made after a troop of banditti, would favour much of the pharisaical squeamishness recorded (Mat. 9. 11.) Has Christ not often delivered his lessons in the open field? and St. Paul, without any dread of profanation in the publick market. (Act 17. 17.) to say religious scrutinies endanger the establishment were neither more nor less than betraying their misgivings of its standing the test, and such another panic as the votaries of Diana were seized with (Act. 19. 28.) nor indeed do I see a more promising means of rousing this miscreant age into a religious mood than these very intelligencers. Considering the general itch of all ranks for their perusal, and their manner of variegating and blending,

ing, as in a physical pill, the delectable and useful almost in the same narrative, the most irreligious must every now and then stumble upon perhaps what they otherwise had never done. You may indeed say a *Bourkite* gives me a cast of his office, true; but alas! by his own confession, he is neither the one thing nor the other, and mongrels, you know, are mostly remarked, if not for turning tail, or, what was called of old, hanging an a-e, at least for making but a poor stand, and not coming up to the thorough serviceableness of either species: whence it is said in the book of Revelations: because thou art lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth: (Rev. 3. 16.) The charge indeed comes home to myself; but a difference must be owned between giving and asking information; that, in a *neutral* capacity, I would not attempt; however as this gentleman may be an exception to the general rule, and that I may not lie under the aspersions of being wanting to the rules of politeness in overlooking his resolves, I send my objections to their sufficiency, discernable by the Italics in the subjoined queries; for which I once more beg a place in your useful Paper.

14. Whether it does not savour as much of inhuman barbarity to oppress religious liberty, not by dint of argument, but a plurality of voices, as a tyrant's trampling upon the civil laws and constitution of his country by a military force?

15. Whether a penal law can be deemed just, which promiscuously affects a whole body of men without distinguishing the innocent from the guilty? If not,

16. Whether, without their express avowal or a legal proof, R—n C—s are responsible for any other than their dogmatical tenets? If not,

17. Whether

17. Whether a dogma be not that, the obstinate and disingenuous denying whereof puts a man out of the communion of the church, whose it is? If so,

18. Whether they who religiously observe the toleration granted by treaties and allegiance sworn to those they call Heretics, or who make such inroads upon the real and personal franchises of the R—n Church should be deemed out of her pale? If not,

19. How then can the *bull in Cæna Domini*, or the *Council of Constance*, as to the affair of the safe conduct and *dispensing* power be dogmas or rules of faith? or,

20. Does either imply any thing like the dreadful anathemas; the trenten canons denounce against such as should ever believe otherwise than there decreed? or,

21. More obligatory than the solemn league and covenant, whose patrons, however once perpetrators of perhaps as horrid scenes as any of the *Popish Confederates*, yet were, upon abjuring it, deemed not unworthy of public protection? Or,

22. Whether selfishness or enthusiasm, fanned, if not hatched by an ignorant but crafty priesthood, has not wholly been at the bottom on both sides? And consequently

23. Whether they alone and blind dupes, should not be made to smart for any complaints of outrageous excesses? And

24. Whether upon the whole R---n C---s are not warranted to construe the predilection for dissenters into a consciousness of the reformers having been the unjust aggressors, who rarely, if ever, are known to be cordially reconciled to the party injured? This, as I humbly conceive, being the case,

25. I ask, if the R—n C—s' neglect of improving the opportunity given by the toleration act at the revolution into a similar claim, in their behalf, was the effect of pusillanimity, inadvertency, or their unadvised tenaciousness of what was really no dogm?

26. Whether the power of excommunication or delivering to Satan, (1 Cor. v. 5.) *jure divino*, extends to the *temporalities of governors*, or only, as Mr. Locke has it, to their exclusion from the church service, Lord's supper, and the like spiritualities?

27. Whether, and for what reason, these queries may be attributed more to *Neuter's* being popishly affected, than to his dread of Rome's, however airy and visionary *kingship* being here reinstated, should the petition, or even dissenting bill pass?

Oct. 23, 1772.

NEUTER.

To this no answer being made I sent the following letter.

To the Printer of the LONDON PACKET.

Nov. 21, 1772.

S I R,

THE visible decay of religion is a no less general than doleful complaint all over Europe. How beautifully harmonious are the revolutions of the starry vault? how uninterruptedly uniform, in consequence of the different seasons, are the shooting, blossoming, fruit-bearing and fading of plants and all vegetables? the very animals are liable to little or no vicissitudes. Find them

them where you will, their instinct is much the same. In all climates the fox is fierce, the hare as meek, the blackbird bedawbs his nest. Thus all nature, by conforming to his established laws, is ever steady in homaging its author, when man alone, alas! the pretended lord of the creation, must, at the expence of his acknowledged liegeance and fealty, be the sport of whim and caprice. From the earliest æra he has been unstable, as well in his religious as politic and œconomical schemes and systems. We must not admire the enormous number of religious objects, uninformed paganism has bent the knee to, when, after the most clear tidings from heaven, the christian bead-roll, for aught I know, may be as long: insomuch that I am apt to think, that whatever it may be with the theory, there now a-days is no other rule of right and wrong in practice, in church, at least, but that of Hob's, the longest sword, the most plodding head or pelf; as I cannot otherwise account how man's belief should veer about as fast as his dress, manners, or architecture-rules.

Was this a curse entailed upon his race, he really were to be pitied; but if of his own seeking, which seems to be the case, as providence could otherwise be scarce justifiable, what is he to throw the blame upon, unless that fatal source of evil, the discovery of which so much perplexed philosophers of old, the abuse of one of his most honourable badges, sweet liberty? an hapless and melancholy case, indeed! but not without that sovereign and only remedy for the most extragant vagaries and lethargic complaints of honest truth-seeking souls, viz. insisting under reason's banner, whose rules, if attended to, would, methinks, be an unerring guide; as I cannot see, why, like the sun, which, the

clouds being once dispersed, enlightens all the hemisphere, this celestial ray should not, in religion and politics, as well as in mathematics, make all mankind, if unbiaſſed and endued withal, think much alike.

But this, as has been ſaid, I found impracticable where our faith muſt hang upon the prieſtly lips; nor, for aught I ſee, is it leſs ſo with thoſe, I ſo much envied, iſlanders, which makes me apprehend, the liberty they ſo much vaunt, is at beſt but tyranny in maſk; they have, indeed the pleaſure of having their fetters rivetted on by their ſecond ſelves or representatives (a quality, for aught I know, ſuiting more or leſs the three branches of their legiſlature) but who does not ſee this to be as much more heinous than deſpotiſm, as ſuicide is, than murder? or is every method of enquiry and information not as effectually precluded by each one ſtifling, and, through the moſt crying diſingenuousneſs, reſuſing to impart the dictates of his ſoul, and not liſtning to thoſe of others; as it could poſſibly be by the moſt tyranniſing, whether R——n C——-c or mahometan deſpot?

As to the liberty of the preſs, Monſ. Lolme, in his *Conſtitution d'Angleterre*, obſerves, “ that, ſo far from being fatal to private reputation, it is in reality its ſureſt bulwark. When no mode of communication with the public is open, every perſon is expoſed, without defence, to the ſecret attacks of malice and envy. The man in office loſes his honour; the man in trade his credit; the private man his character of probity, without knowing either the enemy or his deſigns: but when there is a free preſs, the innocent man directly throws the full-eſt light before the world on the whole tranſaction, and, by an appeal to the public, at once
cruſhes

crushes all his adversaries." But the best things may be abused. What would he, Voltaire, Rousseau, and other advocates of this British ap-panage, have said, had it been made a tool to slander, calumny and falsehood, by its being allowed to the plaintiff, not the defendant? could they have looked upon it in a better light than of downright cheat and mere grimace?

That this is the true case here, appears from hence; they equally lend the deaf ear as well to the sober rationalist as the most fanatically wild enthusiast. However inclined to think favourably of mankind, I can therefore not, for my soul, excuse the utter silence of conformists, much less *Bourkite*, whom I waited for this while, for giving out so soon, which, if true game, he, without first knocking under, had never done: wherefore it is, that, with your leave Mr. Printer, I mean to make another push, to dispossess, if possible, these dumb energumini, and give them the opportunity of retrieving the character as well for integrity as intrepidity they ever bore in the eyes of strangers, by a solution to the subsequent queries, the natural corollaries of the foregoing.

28. Whether, for the security of government, there should not be a difference allowed between the oath of allegiance on the one hand, and the supremacy and test on the other?

29. Should the two latter not be repealed, after enlarging the toleration of dissenters, would it not rather be owing to a majority of purchased or prejudiced voters than sound argument? or,

30. To Episcopalians reviving the old Jewish talion, *tooth for tooth* (Lev. 24. 20.) by way of reprisals, for Rome's former severities, whereof she will ever rue the indiscretion? or,

31. To the dread of their own conscience flying in their face, or of being cried shame at by others, should they not disgorge what they of her's so avidly had gulped? if so,

32. What reliance may, either in church or state, be had upon the betrayers of their own sentiments?

33. What must be their notion of a doomsday, when, it is said, not a single farthing will be overlooked in the general reckoning? (Matt. 5. 26.)

34. Should the dissenter's petition not be thrown out, though some of them have imbibed the non-juring *jus divinum* principle, why should that of the R——n C——cs be, should some of them be infatuated with the deposing and dispensing powers? or,

35. Whatever should be the fate of the dissenting petition, is the claim of R——n C——cs not in all equity warranted by the precedent of the already past toleration-act? or,

36. Untill, like the edict of Nantz, this be reversed, with what justice can R——n C——cs be refused?

37. Whether our national synod could, in prudence, condescend, not only to abolish the subscription to the thirty-nine articles, as they now stand; but even, what is said to be in contemplation, to have them revised? or,

38. Were such a proposal not as suspicious as that of the Arians for getting *consubstantial* struck out of the Nicene creed? or *like in substance* inserted in its place? or,

39. Not like an attempt of putting them upon the foot of versatile human institutions, destitute of every divine irreversible sanction? or,

40. Whether such a step would not entitle R——n C——cs to a revival of the above oaths?

41. With what face can either the clerical or dissenting memorialists ever exclaim against the prevarication of subscribers, should they themselves, as many apprehend, desert the Feathers bond for carrying on their suit?

42. Whether, upon the whole, the, however monstrously unnatural, coalition of protestant and popish malecontents were not the only probable means of balancing the scales, both in the house and out? or,

43. Were such a conjunction, for knocking off their own galling fetters, not more natural than our talked of alliance with the French for the liberty of Poles?

44. Is it not then a kind of infatuation to find both sides swayed by such reciprocal and equally inveterate spleen, as to be totally blind to their real interest?

45. Whether the remissness of R—— n C—— cs, in pressing for a toleration be owing to the apprehension of a treatment similar to that of the jews, when naturalized? or,

46 To such motives as made some Siberian prisoners of state regret their confinement, when enlarged? or,

47. As made some captive jews not return with Zorobabel and Ezra, after the decrees of Cyrus and Artaxerxes? or, in fine,

48. As made the Israelites have a better relish for the Ægyptian flesh-pots (Exod. 16. 3.) than the heavenly manna? (Numb. 21. 5.)

49. Whether it is not with an ill grace the reverend bench vote for the subscription of the 36th canon, when, in opposition to St. Paul (1 Tim. 3. 7.) and the spirit of the 34th and 39th canons, they

they promiscuously receive all backsliding popish priests without credentials?

50. Whether the characters of Messieurs F——r J——n, two late r---n---g---s, and others I could name, were irreproachable?

51. Whether it be not a plain proof these turn-coats have but the loaves and fishes in their eye, when they are seldom, if ever, known to fly to a dissenting congregation, whither they must bring wherewith to live, or work hard for their bread?

52. Whether a wife be a laudable incentive, even had clerical celibacy not been warrantable?

53. Whether the facility of their admission be not to parade with their numbers, as some Jew Nazareens have gloried in those of their pagan scalps? (Gall. 6. 13.)

54. Whether the present difficulty be not reduced to this single point, if R——n C——cs hold the obnoxious tenets as ever-binding dogmas? if so,

55. Whether our half papist *Bourkite* would condescend to help us to the opinion of his half-communion divines, as a collateral eclaircissement of the point? and

56. Whether this does not as nearly concern them as the degree of worship due to the V. Mary magisterially pronounced here some years since by R——C——? should this not succeed,

57. Whether he could prevail on the D. of G. or Count G—g—lli to know from the R——n oracle, if the Braganza and Bourbon families, which of late have, ever and anon, played fast and loose with the bull in *Cæna Domini*, should be deemed heterodox?

58. Whether it be at all likely his Holiness would prevaricate for the sake of promoting a *fa-
vourite*

vourite scheme, at the risque of losing his paramount *kingship* over so many flourishing states, when catching him in a lye?

59. Whether it be not impertinent to the point in hand, whatever the religious profession of *Neuter* may be?

60. This being known but to God and himself, whether it should not in justice be believed such as he declares? if so,

61. Whether, supposing him an irresolute deist, or, as is whispered about, a wavering revelationist, the usual modes of proselyting by the lure of secular interest, the dazzling glare of infallibility, legendary tales and gorgeous pageantry were capable of fixing him? if not,

62. Whether, in the whole sacerdotal tribe there be stock enough of zeal or philanthropy to attempt the conviction to which he is ever open, and beat him out of his neutrality by the invincible force of argument? or,

63. Whether, in pursuance of the 66th canon, this be not the bounden duty of their best dubbed even mitred sort?

64. Whether a Sherlock, a Patrick, a Tillotson, a Stillingfleet, a Tenison, a Burnet, had not undertaken the task at first blush?

65. Whence then the degeneracy? is it, that souls are now less precious? or rather, temporalities less in jeopardy?

66. May we, therefore, not conclude, these to be the sacerdotal *primum mobile* of our halcyon days?

NEUTER.

This

This letter, without assigning any reason, or making a word of reply, the printer has neither inserted nor returned, though required so to do, in the following manner :

To the Printer of the LONDON PACKET.

Dec. 11, 1772.

S I R,

EMPLOYED some time in the service of NEUTER, an outlandish gentleman, seemingly of some rank, upon the footing of a clerk, interpreter and translator of his several productions, I am charged with his compliments for Mr. EVANS, and the most solemn assurance of pledging his honour for taking upon himself every disgrace he may apprehend, in consequence of his correspondence, so far as to send him, upon any such emergency, his real name and place of abode. Should this not induce him, at least, to signify he would be indulged, when there was leisure from more interesting business, he is intreated to get his last letter directed to, &c. where every expence will be defrayed.

AMANUENSIS.

These samples may suffice to give you a notion of protestant insincerity, and convince you of its truth, in England. They are indifferently taken from the unfair conduct of some members as well of the established church as dissenters, who made their appearance in the public prints for some years last past : if it be pretended, the silence of the commons, upon a charge of corruption and passive obedience, proceeds from a consciousness of its truth,

truth, so may we then judge of these advocates. There is one class of men, greatly in vogue, sprung up here between forty and fifty years ago, who affect the title of Methodists, on pretence of living by rules in a certain method, whereof I can give but a slender account. Though their views seem to me no other than to make a trade and gain of godliness, or cover infidelity with a mystic veil, as I cannot otherwise account for their setting up altar against altar, to the no small disturbance of the received mode of worship, and detriment of its ministers; yet I shall forbear venting my surmise, till I have got an opportunity of corresponding with some of them, when, without fail, you shall know all the discoveries I make. Mean while I am, with due respect, honoured Sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

DON FRANCISCO XAVERIO GUZMAN.

P. S. Should you ask, why papists should not be liable to the same censure with protestants, especially as they are, not only equally fallen from their primitive polemical fervour, but are remarkably less alert against deists? I answer, there are risques on the one side, none on the other, where, of course, all the check must be from within, which I can't think any other than self-conviction of their cause being bad, which must be still encreased by their zeal against infidels, whom they cannot foil to any purpose, without the darts recoiling on themselves, as may be seen, b. 9. ch. 1. v. 17. &c. of the *Jew Apologist*. The most that can be concluded against papists is therefore their cowardice, or if you will have it, secular prudence, a Nicodemite conduct condemned in primitive times;

D

not

not that in the least they must of their cause the justness suspect, what I should think their true case, was it not that, they neither will engage themselves, nor, to the betraying their flugishness, or worldyness, suffer those that would: for, who could believe them sincere in a cause they neither would themselves, nor see others defend? but of this more in my next, where their want of candour will be put in such light, as must be recognized by their most sanguine friends.



F I N I S.

